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ABSTRACT

The major directions of scientific research in the field of library work with children, being conducted in Russia, are discussed. The results of pedagogical influence on children's reading depend greatly on the organization of the library service. Two vital problems of such library service are: the organization of a state-wide system of library services for young readers and the determination of the principles of centralization of all children's libraries. Further research in this field, for the improvement of the quality of scientific research and for attaining better results, is contingent upon the co-ordination of efforts of the library associations of many countries, and the systematic exchange of information concerning the programs and the results of the work and experiments. Such international programs would speed up the research process needed to enhance the role of the book and the library in the education and upbringing of children. (NH)

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/USSR/

REPORT ON THE VARIOUS TYPES OF RESEARCH INTO CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND CHILDREN'S LIBRARIES

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The great Russian writer Maxim Gorky wrote: "Children should not be for us merely objects of tedious cares and naive family joys. They are people who have much to achieve in the future and for this we must prepare them thoroughly."

The nation's hope and the country's future, they will be what we shall make of them by labour and knowledge of life, by word and our own example, by our experience, our thoughts and our books.

In the USSR the development of children's literature and library work with the children is of paramount importance. The Soviet government regards the book as a powerful weapon in instilling in the growing generation a materialistic outlook, atheistic approach, devotion to their socialist country, faith in communist ideals and proletarian internationalism and a high esteem for labour. The perspectives of the development of children's literature and librarianship are determined by the decisions of the Party and state authorities and are the subject of discussion at writers' congresses and plenums and at the sessions of the USSR Academy of the Pedagogical Sciences. The Lenin and the State prizes are awarded to authors of childrens' books. Many writers of literature for children and children's librarians have received state awards.

The theory and critical review of children literature are developing successfully in the country. Works which

deal with the trends of development of children's literature, its history, most important types and genres, the creative work of the best writers of children's literature have been published. The course on children's literature (Russian, Soviet, people's of the USSR and foreign) is being read at all the secondary and higher library and pedagogical institutions. Quite a number of dissertations dealing with children's literature are maintained annually in universities, institutes of culture and pedagogical institutes.

The direction and the content of research in the field of children's literature is subject for discussion in itself, therefore, we shall concentrate on the problems of library work with children.

Reading is one of the most important aspects of man's spiritual life. A book read in childhood leaves its indelible mark for life. Guiding children in their reading is a system of cooperation of the librarian, the reader and the book which is a component of the entire process of education and of purposeful and planned shaping of the child's personality. Reading guidance is accomplished by the body of teachers in the process of school studies and activities outside school. Reading interests are also influenced by life, family and Pioneer organisation. But the central and organizing role in this work is alloted to school and public libraries which are frequented by school children and by children of preschool age (beginning with six-year olds).

There are over 166,000 school libraries in our country; nearly 6,000 independent children's libraries, 2,000 children's branches in libraries for adults. Besides all rural, trade union libraries and libraries of other establishments and departments also cater to children.

We regard library work with children as an organic part of library science - a social science - closely linked up with many other sciences; psychology, pedagogics, sociology, demography, history of literature, statistics and so on. A number of institutions and establishments in our country conduct research in the field of the library work among children. It is foremostly the State Lenin Library of the USSR which determines the direction of many lines of research conducted on a state-wide scale, develops programmes and methodology for libraries, and publishes the results of their work. Libraries pay much attention to the organization of children's library services.

The academy of pedagogical sciences and some of its institutes of aesthetic education, psychology and preschool education work on the problems of psychology of children's reading and the better use of the book in the shaping of the child's personality.

Department of children's literature and library work with the children at the institutes of culture, pedagogical faculties and faculties of children's literature of universities and pedagogical institutes train

scientific and pedagogical workers in the field of children's reading through day and by-correspondance post-graduate courses, draw teachers and librarians into research activities, in order to improve their methodological knowledge.

All these departments and the Children's Book Houses conduct regular scientific and practical conferences, literary and pedagogical symposiums at which the results of research are discussed. The best scientific works are published.

More than 200 theses dealing with the problems of children's literature, reading and library work among the children have been published in the last 25 years, and their authors received degrees and titles. I shall cite as an example a few of the papers on problems of children's reading and library work with children:

"Education of aesthetic understanding of fiction in the junior pupils and work with them at children's libraries." "Reading in out-of-school hours as one of the means of expanding polytecnnical knowledge of the pupils."

"System of home reading in the junior forms."

"Out-of-school reading as an instrument of moral and aesthetic upbringing of the pupils of the 5-8th forms."

"Information and bibliographic work in children libraries."

"Work with the readers in a children's library."

"Guidance of out-of-school reading of the 5-8 formers."

"The role and place of the school library in the process of learning and educational work in the secondary school."

The recently formed regional and republican children's libraries actively participate in research activities. In the "Regulations of the State Republic Children's Library" approved in 1967 it is stated that the Library is the republican research centre in the field of library work with the children, national bibliography of children's literature and the history of children's books and that together with the State Lenin Library, scientific institutions and other republican children's libraries, it works on theoretical, historical and practical problems of librarianship in the republic, prepares and publishes scientific works, summarizes the results of scientific research and organizes scientific conferences and sessions.

The "Regulations of the regional and republic (autonomous) children's library" stress the necessity of active participation in research.

In the work of the above-listed institutions and establishments the following basic trends can be singled out:

1. Research in the sphere of children's reading guidance, educational work with children at the libraries including problems connected with studying the interests and special features of children's reading, compiling and use of the bibliography of children's literature.

2. Research into the field of organizing children's library service.

Let us dwell in greater detail on certain aspects of research work. The book cannot be used to its full advantage in the moulding of person without thorough knowledge of the personality of a child. That is why much attention is paid in our country to the study of children as potential readers.

The Institute of Children's Reading established in the first years of Soviet Power initiated a survey of requirements and interests of children. In the twenties the Institute developed methodological principles for a number of research activities and studied the interests and specific features of reading of children, workers and peasants.

In later years much was achieved by publishing houses and editorial boards of the children's newspapers and magazines. In the thirties, Maxim Gorky in connection with the organisation of the specialized publishing house of children's literature requested the schoolchildren in the country to write what they want to read about and what books they like. In a very short time he received over two thousand individual and collective answers which served as the basis for the report on children's literature at the First All-Union Congress of the Soviet Writers held in 1934, formed the foundation for the Publishing Houses's plan of work and were published in Samuil Marshak's article "Children Reply to Gorky."

Today we witness a growing interest in practically all countries towards studying interests of young readers and the place of the book among other mass media in a child's life. Here follow a few examples of research conducted in our country: The Lithuanian Republic library after studying the share reading occupies in a child's free time came to the conclusion that children spend from 17 to 30 per cent of their free time on reading. The House of Children's Books has published the results of their findings on the subjects, genres, writers and books preferred by children of various age groups. Children's libraries in Leningrad and in some other regions of the Russian Federation have conducted numerous questionnaires and have received replies to the following questions: What do you like to read about? Name your favourite writers and books; your favourite heroes. Why do you like them? What newspapers and magazines do you read?

Recently children's libraries in Moscow have studied under the supervision of V. Voronets, lecturer of the children's literature faculty at the Moscow Institute of Culture, reading of popular science literature by children of 11-12, the subject fields and the books they are interested in. The material collected has shown that the interest of schoolchildren for popular science literature has grown considerably as

compared with 1958 when a similar survey had been conducted. Books on popular science make up from 30 to 45 per cent of the general book circulation of the libraries. Mostly they are books that have been read on the recommendation of teachers in connection with the study in school of history, geography and biology. All children display great interest in books on space exploration. 71 per cent of the questioned boys and 52 per cent of the girls read popular science magazines because they are interested in new discoveries in science and technology.

As regards the differences in reading interests of boys and girls it was discovered that boys were foremostly interested in technology, radio, model-making, aviation, navy, physics, football, stamps while girls manifested interest in medicine, theatre, ballet, books about writers, painters, composers, doctors, athletics, figure skating.

I shall not dwell at length on the aspects of this research since you can read about it in the article by V. Voronets to be published in the next issue of the collection Children's and School Library Guide.

Soviet researchers study the process of understanding of the book by the reader, the aesthetic interpretation of a book or books written by the same author, on the same theme, of the same genre and

endeavour to determine the factors influencing reading and the most effective pedagogical methods and forms of library work with children.

The results of the work carried out by the Institute of Pre-school Education of the USSR Academy of Sciences, a group of scientists headed by Professor Zaporozhets and several researchers, who have thoroughly studied the problem perception of books by children of pre-school age have shown that children can aesthetically grasp not merely the entertaining aspect of the plot but also the inner meaning of the story and even its ideological content which is apprehended by them through artistic images, facts, episodes and details of the events. Children at this age cannot word their attitude towards the story they have read. The dramatic or comical side of the plot, vivid and poetic details, puns and lively dialogues usually meet with the child's aesthetic reaction to the book it has read and this reaction finds expression in their mimicry, gestures and exclamations.

The emotions which a boy or a girl experience together with the hero of a book are particularly strong at this age. Sympathy towards him leads to the negation of everything that stands in their hero's way. Children do not want to be and are unable to be indifferent bystanders in relation to the events described in the book. On the contrary, they try to intervene,

to take the side of their favourite character and endeavour to realize the aims of the positive hero not only in their thought but also by their actions. For instance they demand that the story be retailored if they think that the end of it is unjust, spoil illustrations depicting negative personages.

At the same time it has been found that children of pre-school age can understand the inner world of a personage, the motives of his actions, the figurative meaning of words and epithets only with the help of an educator or a librarian.

The conclusions reached by researchers proved that the book can be used in the family for educational purposes, and helped to determine methods of work with the book in the kindergarten and the role of educators and librarians in the guidance of pre-school reading.

A child travels a long path in the development of his attitude towards a work of fiction from the direct naive participation in the events to more complex forms of aesthetic apprehension and evaluation of literary phenomena.

L. Belenkaya, scientific worker of the State Lenin Library, in her book "The Child and the Book" writes about the results of the survey of aesthetic perception of works of fiction by 8-9-year-old children. The author proves that children at this age are quite capable of aesthetic perception. They form their own

attitude towards the heroes of a book. The beautiful, the heroic and the comical sides of the book, the expressive details help the readers grasp the emotional key of the book. Children develop a correct, if not always motivated, attitude towards heroes, and situations that determine the ideological and artistic content of a book.

Children of 8-9 are capable of understanding the motives of the hero's deeds, his inner world and emotions. In some cases children grasp certain peculiarities of the composition, genre and language of the book.

In conclusion the author says that it is at this age that an effort should be made to bring up children as "talented readers" -- to quote Samuil Marshak.

The results of a study conducted by the libraries of the Russian Federation under the guidence of the faculty of the children's literature and library work with children at the Leningrad Institute of Culture were recently published. The object of the study was to define the attitude of children towards poetry, the historical novel and the creative work of Arkady Gaidar.

Research into the process of perception of works of science and fiction by children of 11 and 12, conducted in Azerbaijan has shown that children at this age are foremostly interested first in the plot and dramatic

situations. It was only when they become older that they begin to take interest in scientific hypotheses, new technical ideas and the life of the people in the future.

Without exception all the researchers arrived at the general conclusion that books not merely help children to acquire new knoledge but also influence the formation of certain psychological processes; they affect their attitude towards reality and engender in them new and higher motives of their activity.

The effect a book has on a child, his ability to grasp the ideological and artistic content of a book and his evaluation of it largely depend on social conditions of his environment and on the level of his education. This made it necessary to supplement the psychological and pedagogical aspect of the study, of reading interests and habits of children with the sociological aspect, in other words, by studying causes and factors affecting the reading process.

The State Lenin Library is completing a complex study dealing with the place of the book and the reading in people's life (children included) in small towns. Various factors which influence book requests of children of different ages, the formation of motives for this demand, readers' interests and the criteria of book evaluation has been the main objects of this study.

The researchers began their study on the assumption

that the social ties and relations of children differ from those of adults. The character of social relations of the growing generation is dual: a) contacts with social reality through adults and b) direct social contacts and relations within the age group.

By studying the media of a group of children of one age, as being one of the basic factors influencing the attitude of children towards books and reading in general, the researchers try to find answers to the following questions: what defines the popularity of certain books among children and shifts of interest to one book or another. How to explain the fact that the advice of their little friends is held to be important and usually motivates the choice of a book.

In studying the role of the family in forming children's reading interests, their attitude towards the book and reading, the research workers attempt to determine the extent of this influence on children of different ages, the ways and means of its expression and find out whether it differs according to the family's social and professional status, the educational, financial and cultural level of the family and to what extent.

The studies conducted in our country concerning the requirements and specific traits of children's reading and the factors influencing these requirements are not an end in themselves. They are of value only when they serve as the basis for revision and definition of the value of the book for certain age groups and for

compiling selected lists of books for school children, or if these results help to determine the system of educational work that should be adopted in children's libraries and choose the most effective methods of furthering the role of the book and the library in the lives of children and youngsters.

Prominent Soviet psychologist Rubinstein wrote: "We study the child, teach him... and our aim is not to fix his present stage or level but to help him advance from this stage to the next."

In our country book guidance of children has become a branch of outside-school pedagogics. It presupposes planned and systematic influence of books on children's collectives and on the individual child with the view of extending their knowledge, forming their materialistic outlook, aesthetic approach inherent to Soviet patriotism, civil duty and moral make-up. It is the target of people who are engaged in work with children to imbibe in every child registered at the children's library a love for books, the habit for systematic reading and familiarize him with the best literature available which will assist the harmonious development of his personality and interest in books and reading, improve his literary taste.

The practice of the library work with children, scientific research in this field helped map out the content and the pedagogical principles of the reading guidance:

Combination of education and upbringing in a single process, differentiation of work with children's congregation and with individual children, organisation of new readers' groups in libraries, execution of the guiding role of the educator provided that school-children are granted independence and have the opportunity for the maximum development of their social activities, complex use of book collections in the formation of a many-sided personality.

The principles and the trends of educational library work with children were developed by such prominent Soviet pedagogues as Nadezhda Krupskaya and Anton Makarenko. Present-day researchers creatively interpretate and further develop their conceptions. The scientific workers of the Moscow and Leningrad faculties of the institutes of culture (N. Zhitomirova, V. Voronets and Serova) on the basis of research and summary of library experience have written a textbook for higher institutions called "Guidance of Children's Reading at the Library" in which they classify different forms of library activities for each age group, and suggest the most rational forms and methods of the work with young readers.

Children's libraries in Moldavia are now working out the principles of participation of the children's library in the general educational complex. Some staff members of the State Lenin Library and the State

Saltykov-Shchedrin Library have selected from the mass of the children's literature books which are obligatory for school reading and very soon this list of books will be published. Many other children's libraries in the national republics are engaged in similar work.

V. Razova, Professor of the Leningrad Institute of Culture, has determined ways of developing in youngsters the appreciation and understanding of poetry, of the writers' creative style. O. Khuze, a Leningrad librarian, substantiated the necessity of making the children understand more deeply the moral and aesthetic wealth of the classics and recognise the stereotype while reading. N. Novichkova, Professor, the the Chelyabinsk Institute of Culture, exposed the role of the teacher and the librarian in ~~giving~~ guiding the children in their reading and the forms of their mutual work.

Scientific workers of the Institute of Art Education of the USSR Academy of Sciences work fruitfully on the following subjects: "Children and Youth Literature in the Formation of Moral Ideals in Schoolchildren", "Development of Artistic Taste in Schoolchildren", "Imbibing a Sense of Humour in the 7-8-year olds on the Example of Poetry".

Extensive work is conducted in the field of compilation and utilization of selected bibliography, in giving consulting schoolchildren in their reading. Some of the reasearch papers today dwell on the history

and theory of the recommendatory bibliography of children's books, define the system of compiling bibliographic lists for the children according to different age groups, book genres, special features of bibliography and cataloglization. In her book M. Gubanova, scientific worker of the State Saltykov-Shchedrin Library, has scientifically substantiated the fundamentals of the culture of reading of pre-school children, while the programme of the optional course on the fundamentals in the culture of reading of schoolchildren (seven and eight forms or 13-14-year-olds) is analysed in detail. The 2nd edition of the book on bibliography of children's literature intended for students of institutes of culture compiled by Z. Zhivova, R. Bamm and O. Levina has been issued. It describes the achievements of our country in the development of bibliography of children's literature. An impressive amount of work has already been achieved in the field of the reading guidance of children. Nevertheless much remains to be done in this aspect: the development of the system of reading guidance in each age group, typological determination of readers, which will help to expose groups which demand a special approach and methodology, completion of work concerned with compiling lists of recommended reading, examination of possibilities of expanding the scope of literature for youngsters by including books for adults, re-examination of the programme or library

activities in connection with the new study plan and the syllabus introduced in schools.

The research methods developed in our country stem from the aims of the research being conducted, from the social, psychological and physiological features of children under study. Usually a complex of methods is used which helps to obtain the most representative data. As an example I shall cite methods which were used during the research on the subject "Book reading in small towns".

1. Questionnaire. Interviews in the school "What do you read today?", questionnaires in the class "How do you spend your day?", spontaneous questionnaires conducted in the class including questions "To what questions would you like to receive exhaustive and correct answers?", "What would you like to do if there were no obstacles in your way?", "Would you rather go to the cinema, listen to the radio or watch a TV programme than read a book?", "If you prefer reading, tell us why?", "What film have you seen lately, what book have read lately?", "Whose opinion on books is important to you?" Standardized questionnaires, interviews of the parents of schoolchildren at places of residence (special selection) in the course of pedagogical surveys of a family. Discussing at the parents' meetings such subjects as "Your children and books", talks with teachers, pioneer leaders, heads of

out-of-school children amateur talent groups, workers of children's and school libraries according to a special scheme.

II. Analysis of readers' requests and cards.

III. Episodic analysis of book requests in book shops and libraries; the reason for this demand.

IV. Analysis of the documentation.

Individual survey - composition on "How I spent my day yesterday". Home assignment - "What books and magazines I have at home." The opinion about the book gleaned with the help of a bookmark. Social survey - records of talks and discussions on books. Pedagogic documentation: plans and accounts on educational school work, documentation of subject-field sections, characteristics of pupils and at the school class as a whole. Plans and accounts of the parents' school committees, public school organisations. Documentation of libraries and book selling organisations.

V. Analysis of the content and the character of the newspaper, radio, cinema and TV information related to book propaganda. Literary and pedagogical analysis of literary works, collected as experimental materials for work with children.

VI. Observation of the reactions of children during book discussions, life conditions of schoolchildren observed during pedagogical survey of the family.

VII. Natural experiment. Organization of broadcasts about new books over radio and television networks with the subsequent questioning. Organization of broadcasts about books over the school radio network with the subsequent questioning. Organization of school film matinees at local cinemas with the subsequent discussion of a film or a book at the school and in the process of individual talks with children. Discussions and talks on books which help to reveal how a literary work is apprehended and evaluated by children of various age groups.

The material collected by the librarian and his every-day work with children forms the basis for the survey. These include questionnaire files in which each card bears the name of the book, the subject and questions of interest to the readers, library cards which fix the interests of a reader and the dynamics and his attitude to the book he has read and, finally, the note of the librarian. Normally readers' cards are kept at the library for several years and make it possible to trace the evolution of the reader's interests and the development of his reading culture.

Observations of readers made by a librarian during book selection: their book stock orientation ability, what books they select by themselves, whether they use recommendatory bibliography, what places in a book draw their attention during book discussions, and what are

their emotions when the book is being read by the librarian or during independent reading in the reading-hall.

Readers' opinion about the books they read, their drawings on the subject, compositions on the subject "The book I like", "What I would like to read in the summer" suggested by the teacher, talks of the librarian with the readers when the former exchange books.

In many schools children keep records of the books they have read regardless of the source they have obtained them from. Very often librarians keep track of their pedagogical work which is of great value for the researchers.

In libraries one can find a wealth of material testifying to the fact that pedagogical work has yielded good results and that certain methods of literature propaganda were highly effective. For instance information can be obtained here about the number of books issued on the subject of a discussion held at the library, what books enjoyed popularity and which were neglected.

The problems of studying and determining book stocks of children's libraries and the principles of their organization are closely connected with the guidance of children's reading. Our country annually publishes about 2,500 book titles for children. The library book stocks have grown immensely. Very often they run up to 100,000 and 200,000 copies. We are

constantly studying the composition of the library collections and tackling the problems of their organization. Research of this kind has been conducted recently in children's libraries in the Byelorussian Republic and is now taken up Ukrainian libraries. As a result standard catalogues of children's literature for rural and children's libraries which include all the best books necessary for the extension of knowledge of schoolchildren and for education of children of various age groups were published. However there are still many questions awaiting their solution: what should the book stock of the children's libraries of various types - republic, regional, central town, district - contain, book collections of the secondary and grammar school libraries, how many copies of one book should there be, book circulation, whether to adhere to the principle of comprehensive acquisition of book stocks in republic and regional children's libraries or the collections can be but relatively comprehensive. But where is the borderline of this "relativity" and how to understand the term "rarely demanded literature" as related to children's libraries, how the wealth of books in the possession of children and school libraries can be put to good use.

It has been long acknowledged that the results of pedagogical influence on children's reading depends greatly on the organization of the library service.

We are faced here with two vital problems: organization of state-wide system of library services for young readers and determination of the principles of centralization of all children's libraries.

At present research programmes have been drawn up dealing with these problems. Local experiments conducted in a number of republics would help to establish the advantages and shorcomings of a centralized library service for children on the basis of libraries for adults(or independently) on the basis of the central children's library and to introduce into practice the most satisfactory ones.

We have mentioned only cardinal directions of scientific research in the field of library work with children which are being conducted in our country. Some have already born fruit, others are in the work stage and or are being mapped out.

One of the conditions for further research in this field for the improvement of the quality of scientific research and for attaining better results is, to our mind, co-ordination of efforts of the library associations of various countries, systematic exchange of information, programmes and the results of the work and experiments.

We think it would be a good and effective idea for the secretariat of the sub-section with the assistance of the working group to draw up a perspective plan of scientific research work for the period of 3 to 5 years

with due regard for the possibilities and interests of each country. Thus, for instance, Denmark could undertake to determine book-stock standards for children's libraries and their scientific substantiation; the Library Association of England could determine the system of the children's library service and the role of the book in the psychotherapy of sick children; the Library Association of the German Democratic Republic could develop a system of bibliographic aids for children of various age groups; the Soviet Union could define the role of book and reading in the life of children in small towns, the place of the library among other forms of mass media, etc.

The discussion of results of these and other research works, giving them prominence in the international press or in the press in various countries, the exchange of scientific workers for practical participation in the research activities would considerably speed up the research process, cut down the time required for them and allow to obtain authentic data, enhance the role of the book and the library in educating and upbringing children and youth.